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Excerpt from Here Is Help for You by James Gordon Gilkey

CPYRGHT

"Some years ago an efficiency-expert visited the plant of a certain Electric Power Company. Subsequently he gave this description of one of the men he found working there. 'We went through the boiler-room and the turbine-room and finally reached the room in which meters are overhauled and repaired. There I saw a workman whose job it is to fasten the dial-plate to a meter which is ready for service. I watched him for a time and then said to him, 'I've often wondered how a meter works. What's inside of one, anyway?' To my surprise he replied, 'I don't know. I've never looked inside a meter.' Subsequently I made an inquiry about that man, and the length of his service in that plant. I learned that he had been working in that one department, and on that one job, for nearly twenty years. During that long period he had attached dial-plates to literally thousands of meters, but he had never had either the curiosity or the gumption to look inside a meter. It was not the fault of the Power Company, or of society as a whole, that he had remained in a dull job. It was the fault of this man himself. Either he would not, or he could not, give his work interest and imagination as well as brute effort."

"You say that you have a job which is dull, repetitious, devoid of significance and satisfaction? But study your way of handling that job. How much thought are you giving it? How much imagination are you putting into it? Have you ever inquired where the job came from, what it leads to? Have you ever asked how it fits into the complex pattern of the community's life? Have you ever cudgelled your brain to find how your own way of doing the job might be improved? Maybe the dullness of the job is not traceable to anything in the job itself: maybe its dullness can be traced to your attitude toward the job, your way of handling the job. Maybe if you gave the job more interest, more imagination, it would glow with new interest."

"There is one more thing which can be said about jobs--all jobs. Each one can be interpreted in human terms, as a venture in helping people. When a job is thus interpreted it inevitably gains significance. It suddenly brings the man who is doing it a sense of personal importance. He no longer pictures himself as a slave who manipulates a machine, adds columns of figures, corrects papers, or lays bricks. He begins to see himself as a servant-of-the-community, an individual whose efforts and achievements help other people near and far. Then suddenly his attitude toward his job, like his feeling about himself, changes."

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